" AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE UNDER 37 CFR § 1.111
Serial Number: 09/750,487
Filing Date: December 27, 2000
Title: DIGITAL RIGHTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND METHOD

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IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows.

1-25   (Cancelled).

26.   (Currently Amended) A method of acquiring and playing digital content comprising:

acquiring a physical key containing a unique key code from a key provider;

requesting digital content from a content provider;

after locking the digital content with an unlock code associated with the key code

contained in the physical key, receiving the locked digital content; and

entering the locked digital content into a playing device that reads the key code and

determines whether the key code is associated with the unlock code, the device

being enabled to unlock ~~code,~~ and play the digital content if the key code is

associated with the unlock code, the physical key being a physical object adapted

to be carried by a user apart from the playing device.

27.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the step of acquiring the physical key includes providing the key provider with user identification information for use by the key provider establishing a user account, the user account including the user identification information and the key code.

28.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, further including providing the content provider with the key code for use by the content provider in validating the key code prior to providing the locked digital content.

29.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the locked digital content is locked by encryption and unlocked by decryption.

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30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the step of acquiring the physical key includes accessing a first web site of the key provider and requesting the physical key via the first web site, and wherein the step of requesting the digital content includes assessing a second web site of the content provider and requesting the digital content via the second web site.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the physical key is acquired at no charge, and wherein the digital content is purchased.

32. (Previously Presented) A method of managing digital rights comprising:

providing a physical key containing a key code to a requesting user;

locking digital content with an unlock code associated with the key code contained in the physical key;

after locking the digital content, providing the locked digital content to the requesting user;

receiving the locked digital content in a playing device that reads the key code and determines whether the key code is associated with the unlock code; and

enabling the playing device to unlock and play the digital content if the key code is associated with the unlock code, the physical key being a physical object adapted to be carried by the user apart from the playing device.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, further including establishing a user account including user identification information and the key code for the requesting user prior to the step of providing the physical key.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, further including obtaining and validating the key code for the requesting user prior to the step of providing the locked digital content.

35.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, further including administering a first web site for receiving a request for the physical key from the requesting user, and administering a second web site for receiving a request for the digital content from the requesting user.

36.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the locked digital content is locked by encryption and unlocked by decryption.

37.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the physical key and the playing device include respective wireless transceivers for communicating the key code from the key to the playing device.

38.   (Previously Presented) A digital rights management system, comprising:
       a physical key containing a key code and provided to a requesting user;
       means for locking digital content with an unlock code associated with the key code
              contained in the physical key;
       means for providing the locked digital content to the requesting user; and
       a playing device for receiving the locked digital content, receiving the key code, and
              determining whether the key code is associated with the unlock code, the playing
              device being enabled to unlock and play the digital content if the key code is
              associated with the unlock code, the physical key being a physical object adapted
              to be carried by the user apart from the playing device.

39.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 38, wherein the physical key and the playing device include means for communicating the key code to the playing device.

40.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 38, wherein the means for providing the locked digital content to the requesting user includes a web site on the Internet.

41.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 40, wherein the means for providing the locked digital content secures validation of the key code prior to providing the locked digital content.

42.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 38, further including means for providing the physical key, and establishing a user account including user identification information and the key code for the requesting user prior to providing the key.

43.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 42, wherein the means for providing the physical key includes a web site on the Internet.

44.   (Previously Presented) A digital rights management system, comprising;

         a physical key containing a key code;

         digital content locked, at a time of acquisition of the digital content by a requesting user, with an unlock code associated with the key code contained in the physical key; and

         a playing device for receiving the locked digital content, receiving the key code, and determining whether the key code is associated with the unlock code, the playing device being enabled to unlock and play the digital content if the key code is associated with the unlock code, the physical key being a physical object adapted to be carried by the user apart from the playing device.

45.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the digital content is locked by encryption and unlocked by decryption

46.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the physical key and the playing device include means for communicating the key code to the playing device.

47.   (Currently Amended) A physical key for use in a digital rights management system, wherein at a time of acquisition of digital content by a requesting user the system locks the

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digital content with an unlock code associated with a key code contained in the physical key, wherein a playing device of the system is adapted to receive the locked digital content, receive the key code, and determine whether the key code is associated with the unlock code, the playing device being enabled to unlock and play the digital content if the key code is associated with the unlock code, the physical key comprising:

> a physical object containing the key code and being transportable by the user apart from the playing device of the system.[;]